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EUR/CARC: JCOONEY

SUBJECT: (U) REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: AZERBAIJANI
LEADERSHIP RIVALRIES, ALLIANCES, PLANS AND INTENTIONS
(C-RE9-02494)

Classified By: ELISSA G. PITTERLE, DIRECTOR, INR/OPS

¶1. (S) WASHINGTON ANALYSTS ARE CLOSELY FOLLOWING THE AZERBAIJANI GOVERNMENT AND ARE INTERESTED IN THE RELATIONSHIPS OF KEY NATIONAL POLITICAL FIGURES WITH PRESIDENT ILHAM AND FIRST LADY MEHRIBAN ALIYEV. ALSO OF INTEREST ARE ANY PERSONAL AND/OR BUSINESS RIVALRIES OR ALLIANCES AMONG TOP AZERBAIJANI OFFICIALS. WE ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN THE PLANS OF THE ALIYEV ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS FOR AZERBAIJAN AND FOR THEIR OWN POLITICAL FUTURES, ESPECIALLY GIVEN CONCERNS ABOUT REGIONAL STABILITY AND RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA, IRAN, ARMENIA, AND TURKEY.

¶2. (S) AS TIME AND RESOURCES PERMIT, WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE POST'S INSIGHTS ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND WOULD USE ANY REPORTING ON THESE TOPICS TO INFORM U.S. POLICYMAKERS.

A) (S/NF) THE FOLLOWING TOP AZERBAIJANI OFFICIALS ARE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST:

- BAYLAR EYYUBOV, CHIEF OF PRESIDENTIAL SECURITY
- OLIVIER MESTELAN, PRESIDENT OF SWISS FIRM PRIVAXIS
- ALI ASADOV, PRESIDENTIAL ENERGY ADVISOR
- OKTAY ASADOV, PARLIAMENT SPEAKER
- ABDULBARI GOOZAL, PRESIDENT OF AZERSUN HOLDINGS.
- JAHANGIR ASKEROV, HEAD OF AZERBAIJANI AIRLINES
- ELDAR MAHMUDOV, MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY
- MEHRIBAN ALIYEVA, FIRST LADY
- KEMALLADDIN HEYDAROV, FORMER MINISTER OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS
- HEYDAR ALIYEV II, SON OF THE PRESIDENT
- COLONEL CEYHUN RZAYEV, DIRECTOR OF SPETZNAZ (SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIT IN THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY)
- YAVER JAMALOV, MINISTER OF DEFENSE INDUSTRY MINISTER
- ZIYA MAMADOV, MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION
- RAMIZ MEHDIYEV, PRESIDENT'S CHIEF OF STAFF
- NOVRUZ MAMMADOV, PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR
- ALI HASANOV, PRESIDENTIAL APPARAT
- ALI ASADOV, PRESIDENT'S ENERGY ADVISOR
- ELSAD NASIROV, VICE PRESIDENT OF SOCAR
- SAMIR SHARIFOV, MINISTER OF FINANCE
- ELMAR MAMMADYAROV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
- COL. GEN. SAFAR ABIYEV, MINISTER OF DEFENSE
- RAMIL USUBOV, MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS (U)

B) (S/NF) HOW WOULD POST DESCRIBE THE FINANCES AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV OR HIS WIFE MEHRIBAN'S? ARE THERE ANY PLANS TO SEIZE CONTROL OF TOP OFFICIALS' ASSETS, PROPERTY, INVESTMENTS, OR COMPANIES? ARE HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN CORRUPTION AND, IF SO, WHICH INDIVIDUALS, WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES, AND WHO HAS KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT?

C) (S) WHAT INDICATIONS, IF ANY, ARE THERE OF INTERNAL BATTLES AMONG MINISTERS OR OLIGARCHS?

D) (S) WHAT ARE MEHRIBAN ALIYEVA'S OWN POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS

AND PLANS?

E) (S) WHO DOES POST JUDGE TO BE THE TOP FIVE PEOPLE ILHAM ALIYEV TRUSTS MOST? PLEASE INCLUDE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, FAMILY MEMBERS, OR FRIENDS. DOES HE LISTEN TO THEM AND FOLLOW THEIR ADVICE?

F) (S) WHO ARE THE TOP FIVE PEOPLE MEHRIBAN ALIYEVA TRUSTS MOST? PLEASE INCLUDE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, FAMILY MEMBERS, OR FRIENDS. DOES SHE LISTEN TO THEM AND FOLLOW THEIR ADVICE?

G) (S) WHAT ACTIVITIES IS PRESIDENTIAL DAUGHTER LEYLA ALIYEVA CONDUCTING IN RUSSIA, FOR INSTANCE, IN HER CAPACITY AS HEAD OF THE HEYDAR ALIYEV FOUNDATION RUSSIA BRANCH? WHAT INFLUENCE DOES HER FATHER-IN-LAW, ARAZ AGALAROV HAVE WITH THE AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA, THE AZERBAIJANI GOVERNMENT, OR THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS CIRCLES?

H) (S) WHICH MINISTERS OR KEY GOVERNMENT FIGURES HAVE RIVAL BUSINESS INTERESTS IN BAKU OR THE REST OF THE COUNTRY? ARE BUSINESS INTERESTS AFFECTING THEIR POLITICAL PERFORMANCE, THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT, OR THE GENERAL TONE OF INTER-MINISTERIAL COOPERATION?

I) (S) WHO ARE THE STRONG YOUTH LEADERS IN OPPOSITION GROUPS, MEDIA, OR THE PRIVATE SECTOR? WHAT POLITICAL ACTIVITY, IF ANY, DO THESE YOUTH LEADERS ENGAGE IN, AND WHAT IS THEIR LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION AND COMMITMENT? WHAT ARE THEIR OBJECTIVES AND HOW DOES THE GOVERNMENT VIEW THEM? ARE ANY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CURRENTLY SYMPATHETIC TO THE YOUTH OPPOSITION OR OPPOSITION LEADERS IN GENERAL?

J) (S) PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ANY SO-CALLED OPPOSITION GROUPS THAT ARE ACTUALLY DE FACTO TOOLS OF THE ALIYEV ADMINISTRATION. HOW ARE THEY ORGANIZED, WHAT ARE THEIR OBJECTIVES, AND WHO WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION DIRECTS THEIR ACTIVITIES?

K) (S) WHOM DOES PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV MOST FREQUENTLY COMMUNICATE OR HAVE CONTACT WITH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF HIS OFFICIAL DUTIES?

L) (S) WITHIN THE AZERBAIJANI GROUP AAA (AN ASSOCIATION OF ALUMNI FROM AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES), ARE ANY MEMBERS REFORM-MINDED AND PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE? ARE THERE ANY SIGNS THAT MEMBERS HAVE BEEN PLANTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MONITOR THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES?

M) (S) WHICH TOP AZERBAIJANI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE MAJOR BUSINESS TIES TO TURKEY, RUSSIA, OR IRAN? WHICH AZERBAIJANI OPPOSITION MOVEMENT LEADERS ARE RECEIVING MONEY OR ASSISTANCE FROM TURKEY, RUSSIA, OR IRAN?

N) (S) WHAT ARE THE PRESIDENT'S AND HIS TOP OFFICIALS' VIEWS ON THE TERRORIST THREAT IN AZERBAIJAN? ARE THEY LEGITIMATELY CONCERNED, OR IS BAKU USING CRACKDOWNS ON MOSQUES AND OTHER EFFORTS TO DISTRACT FROM ITS DEMOCRATIC RECORD OR TO CURRY FAVOR WITH THE WEST? PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY FUTURE PLANS REGARDING AZERBAIJAN'S ISLAMIC COMMUNITY.

O) (S) PLEASE REPORT ON ANY MINISTERS OR KEY, RISING DEPUTY MINISTERS WHO REGULARLY PRACTICE ISLAM. DOES RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AFFECT THE OUTLOOK OF ANY TOP OFFICIALS OR THEIR IDEAS ABOUT THE COUNTRY'S DIRECTION?

P) (S/NF) WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF CHIEF OF PRESIDENTIAL SECURITY AND LONG-TIME ALIYEV FAMILY CONFIDANT BAYLAR EYYUBOV AND OF SUSPECTED FINANCIAL FACILITATOR ABDULBARI GOOZAL? HOW DID THE ALIYEVS MEET GOOZAL AND HOW DOES HE FIT INTO SOCAR AND THE ILLICIT ALIYEV FORTUNE?

Q) (S) WHAT ARE PRESIDENT ALIYEV AND HIS INNER CIRCLE'S CONCERNS REGARDING THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. OR WITH EUROPE? PLEASE DESCRIBE ALIYEV'S AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS' VIEWS OF IRAN, RUSSIA AND TURKEY.

R) (S) PLEASE DESCRIBE ALIYEV'S COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HEADS.

13. (U) PLEASE CITE C-RE9-02494 IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF
REPORTING IN RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS.
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